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THE
MISSION OF GREAT BRITAIN

TO THE WORLD,

OR SOME OF THE LESSONS WHICH SHE IS
NOW TEACHING.

A LECTURE

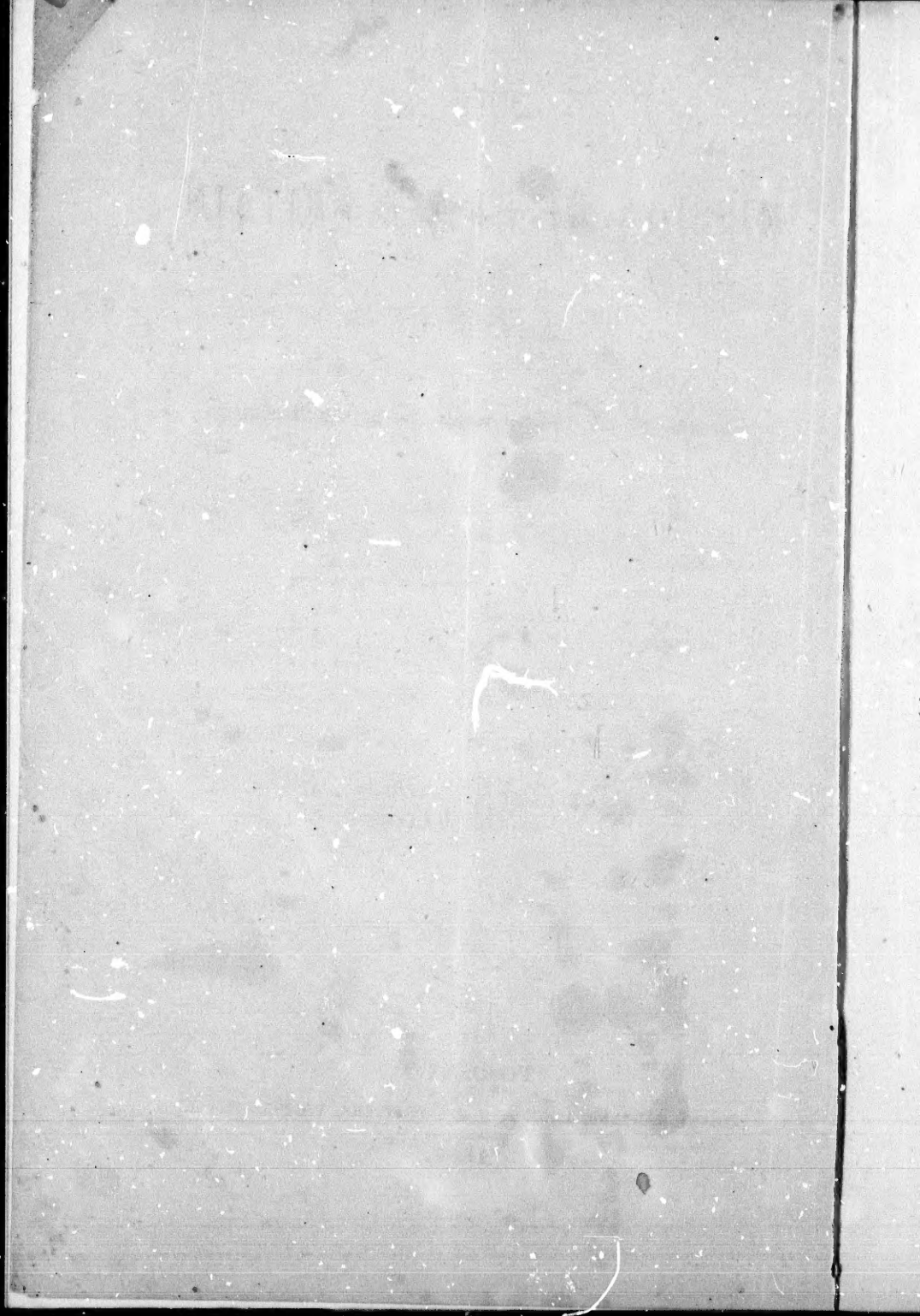
DELIVERED AT STRATFORD

BY REV. JAMES GEORGE, D.D.

TORONTO:

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It was the purpose of the British Government to send a mission to the world to promote the cause of peace and justice.

The mission was composed of a number of distinguished statesmen and scholars, who were sent to visit the various countries of the world and to report on the state of affairs in each.

The mission was successful in its purpose, and its reports were of great value to the British Government. It was found that the world was in a state of great confusion and disorder, and that the cause of peace and justice was in great danger.

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LESSONS WHICH SHE IS NOW TEACHING.

To do justice to the subject which this statement announces, would require a volume—and not a small one; and a genius incomparable greater than the man who now addresses you. All that I shall attempt, will be to state and illustrate a few prominent points from this vast theme. If this serves to awaken suitable reflections, and an hour's rational entertainment, then the object of this address shall have been accomplished.

As we profess to believe, that the providence of God extends to all human affairs—the least as well as the greatest, so assuredly, the greatest of these ought to secure the most careful consideration. By Him kings reign, and nations are raised up to act their part on the stage of time, and then decay and pass away into the surrounding mass; so that many of them entirely disappear from the records of the world. Yet no believer, in a wise and superintending providence doubts that each one had its appropriate work to perform in the great order of things. This is a very marvellous thought, but the human mind will not fully comprehend it, till the great drama is finished and assembled worlds shall shout Hallelujah.

The enquiry, what were the grand purposes subserved by the Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek and Roman Empires; were a highly important and delightful theme, but one too vast to be taken up even partially on the present occasion. Moreover, the

topic we have chosen, can on the whole be satisfactorily handled without entangling ourselves with these matters of enquiry. What is the mission of Great Britain in the world; or what are some of the lessons God has commissioned her now to teach, is a question which stands out with sufficient individuality? In humbly attempting to answer this—and surely humility here is indispensable—I would remark.

- I. *That she has been commissioned to teach a noble language, embodying the richest scientific and literary treasures.*

The language of every people is perfect for their own use. If their thoughts are few and simple, a simple language answers their purposes. Language in fact, is never got up *to order*, nor is it ever either strengthened, or polished, as an article of mere curiosity, or taste. As the mind grows, language grows, and adapts itself to the thinking of the people. Hence, a highly civilized race, will ever have, a highly accomplished language. The English tongue strikingly illustrates this. It is very generally held, that a certain mixture of blood, drawn from the noblest branches of the human family, produces the finest race of men. But, be that as it may, we see that a mixture of certain tongues, ever gives as a product—the noblest speech. This is specially true, when the elements are drawn from highly cultivated languages. The English tongue, is in all senses a very noble one. I apply the term noble, with a rigorous exactness. Yet, all but mere pedants readily allow, that the worth of any language, is on the whole in proportion to the amount of high thought, which the words of it carry. The Roman and Greek languages came to maturity under circumstances widely different from ours; yet, each of these tongues becomes invaluable from the amount of thought it embodies. Our present English has appropriated many words and thoughts from these and other tongues, till it has, at length, accumulated vast and imperishable riches.

But now, mark it—Great Britain is on a grand scale, engaged in teaching this *noble tongue* to the world. Some have fancied—I am one of them—that long before the close of time, there will be a language universally known to all men. This, if a true surmise, will repair the evil that happened at Babel, a short time after the flood. The multiplicity of languages is a singular, and

in many ways a painful phenomenon. But in a world, all in confusion by sin, it is easy to see that this diversity of tongues must operate in a thousand ways to the prevention of crimes. But we do not suppose that, this wickedness is to continue to the last, as the normal condition of our world. Without assuming the high millenarian view—which I do not hold—still, one may soberly hope that a long course of ages have yet to come, of great purity, moral order, truth and comparative peace, in our world. Now what more necessary for giving full effect to this happy state of things, than one language. For the diffusion of learning, science and divine truth this would be greatly instrumental. Indeed, the millennium, even in a modified sense, would require this instrumentality.

I hope it is not spoken ignorantly, nor in a tone of arrogant patriotism, when I say that the English language is eminently fitted for this purpose, and that things for a generation past seem to point to its final accomplishment. Yet, as it is not the *mere words* of a language that will entitle it to such a high function, we are naturally led to enquire what will give a lasting vitality and a universal influence to our tongue. What are its riches, in all that is really great in thought? Now no one capable of judging, requires any arguments to satisfy him that, our tongue is such in science and literature, as will make it an invaluable legacy to the world for all future ages. I may assume that, you are no strangers to the rich freightage with which this Argosy is so majestically sailing down the stream of time. No one denies that several other languages, as French and German, are also rich in thought; but where shall we look for any one, with such a treasure of all that men hold to be useful and precious? Were I but to write the names of distinguished English authors, the list would swell to a volume. Nothing of this shall be attempted.

But as among David's many warriors, there were a *first three*; so do we find here also, a first three. Persons of taste and culture, will anticipate me when I say, Shakespeare; the English translation of the Bible, and Milton stand out prominently. Of course I speak merely of the *English* of the translation. In this respect it is incomparably excellent. Language, the very highest in all qualities is embalmed with thought, which will literally render it immortal. There is a period in every tongue, when it arrives

at maturity, for *strength* and *precision*. Our tongue had reached this high point, when the translation of the Bible was made. He who would deny this, would bring either his scholarship or candour into question, and not merely the men of our times but of the latest ages, will bless God that Shakespeare and Milton laid down their thoughts in the noblest English that ever was spoken. Indeed, I cannot but think, that were nothing to remain in the language but these three works—the Translation, Shakespeare and Milton—the language and the thoughts would continue to instruct and delight men to the end of time. I indulge a fancy—let no man disturb it—that men will be reading *Paradise Lost*, and *Hamlet*, and the “wonderful works of God,” in pure English, when the Angel shall be lifting up his hand and saying “Time is no more.”

But when we thus speak, of the universal dominion of the English language, it is needful to guard against misapprehensions. I do not mean that in its imperial reign it shall wholly eclipse the minor dynasties of tongues, no! The probability is that many of these shall continue still to exist, but occupy a very subordinate place. This may be illustrated by what we now see. There are in England some dozen of Patois dialects. It is no easy matter for the Yorkshire man to understand the Cockney, nor the Cockney the peasant from Somersetshire, nor the man who only understands good English to understand either of them. What I mean by the allusion is—that other languages will remain, but will remain only as the obscure Patois of the world, while English will become the grand medium for all the business of government, for commerce, for law, for science, for literature, for philosophy, and divinity. Thus it will really be a universal language for the great material and spiritual interests of mankind.

Such is the mighty task that seems to await it. But what of the *Mistress* that is to give effect to this great work. Great Britain is emphatically that mistress, and that she is really commissioned to teach a universal language to the world. There is no need for aping a prophetic strain in this matter. I ask you simply to look at present appearances, and say, if these do not sufficiently foretell the future. Is not the *teacher* fairly seated for the high task. *Are not the forms* all placed, are not the classes

—the nations—all assembling? Do you not see that I am indulging in no groundless, or vain prediction; but that it rests on the strongest probability—that our English speech shall become the universal speech of all men.

To make this plain I shall notice a few facts. The little boys and girls in our schools, will not be very old men and women, ere they find themselves in the midst of nearly two hundred millions of human beings on this continent, speaking the language in which they now lisp their tales. The mind is absolutely amazed in contemplating the multitude of the English speaking people, destined to inhabit North America. But their language had its origin in Britain. This, however, is only one aspect of the nations that are gathering in to the *English School*. On the southern shores of Africa, another great community is forming and rapidly swallowing up other languages. Then far away to the south, Australia, and also New Zealand, which has been called the Great Britain of the Pacific, are rapidly growing into great peoples. These territories, within the memory of living men, were strangers to our speech, and civilization. Now they are all vast communities, while some of them, have great cities and a wealthy population—all thinking, speaking, writing and printing the same language.

But there is something more wonderful still, as to the learners of our tongue. It is known that, from an almost forgotten language in India—the Sanerit, our Anglo Saxon speech, drew not a few of its primitive elements—but now, mark it; the English at this day, bids fair to become the leading tongue of India. Men will soon not be able to sell a bale of cotton at Bombay, but in that tongue. Hundreds of schools, and many colleges are busily teaching it. A knowledge of it is decreed by the *masters* of the country to be indispensable, to all the higher offices and places of trust. Not to speak of the singular moral material, which the language carries, who, under these circumstances can doubt of its success. If Great Britain holds dominion in India, for another hundred years, her speech and literature will be as familiar in Calcutta, Madras, and Delhi; as in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin. So much for the prospects of the diffusion of our tongue. The *heart* from which has flown out, and which with a mightier impulse will still flow out, all these influences is that

little Island—that glorious home of ours. She sits as a mighty teacher—and while she sits in her matchless powers of political supremacy, commerce, wealth and literature—these influences will combine to diffuse her language, with all the excellencies kindred to it throughout the whole world.

II. *Great Britain is teaching the world the true principles of religious toleration.*

This is a momentous and difficult task, but before any discussion can be attempted on it; it is needful that we settle the meaning of the term *religion*, as it is looked at by a wise government. It is plain, we can never arrive at any just notion on this, by asking is this man's religion true, or that? Is this the only thing a government is to tolerate? Religion as it is has to be dealt with by government, is far more comprehensive. No government, either can or ought to attempt to weigh the amount of truth, that lies in this or the other system of religion, in granting it toleration. It is this, and this alone, which makes the vital point, with which the government has to deal; is the religion, call it what you may, held conscientiously as a faith, by which men try to shape their moral course in life and in which they profess to find their sole comfort at death? This is really the question, with which the government has to do. But this, it may be replied when tried by right reason, and the high principles of a Divine Theology, may be a very wild system of opinions. No matter, if it be the system of a man's faith, it is his *religion*. He thinks the great God gave it to him, believes he will be held accountable for the use he makes of it. Now, suppose he really holds his system of faith under this light, what right has any government on earth to step in betwixt that man and his God, and tell him that he is not so to believe, or so to worship, without pains and penalties? But this is really what intolerance in this matter does.

Now we aver that, the wildest system of belief embraces no principle more wild than this, and leads to no practices more monstrous. For observe, every religion that is sincerely professed, founds on *conscience*, and is wrought out by conscience. When men, therefore are persecuted for their religion. they are persecuted for the dictates of conscience. This whole matter is

very simple and very awful—is man, speaking through an earthly government the Lord of the conscience? Or is the great God its Lord? Sophistry may mystify this, but never can answer it. If God holds the human conscience in his own hand, and has not delegated the power to control it, then the dictates of conscience are the most sacred things. To interfere with these in any other way, *but by moral suasion* is a usurpation of the prerogatives of the most high God, and a plain attempt to set aside his most essential authority. To God alone, man must ever be accountable for the faith he holds, and the worship he renders.

But his faith may be a folly, and his worship an impiety. Is it not therefore the duty of a parental government to stop this folly, and end this impiety by the rack and the stake if nothing else can do it? No—by the God of truth—no. Man is a rational creature and if the thing desiderated—the change of his faith—cannot be done rationally, it of course never can be done according to the nature God has given him. In the end, all persecutors are driven to the employment of one instrumentality; sheer physical force. But mere brute force, arming itself with tortures never can reach the rational soul. Violent and malignant force is a mere dumb devil, which may rend and tear; but can awaken no right feeling, teach no truth, and lead to no rational course of conduct. But, persecutors can at least silence men. Most true, they can do that, and have done it often enough. But then, what did they make of their living converts? They made them foul hypocrites, never voluntary believers, even on their own grounds. And if they had to silence men by death, *who could not be converted*, they deprived the country—a sad deprivation—of the only portion of its sincere and honest people. I am not so ill read as not to know what all persecutors say to this. They dislike the whole work of persecution exceedingly. Why not then abandon it? They cannot do that. By this very painful work, they seek the glory of God and the salvation of men. *They* seek the glory of God! Do they? How? By usurping his most sacred prerogative; the right to rule the human conscience. And *they* are seeking the salvation of souls—How? By extinguishing the life of honest men, or by turning the living into “whited sepulchres.” This is surely doing evil with a vengeance that good may come.

But let me guard you against mistakes here. There is a point where all enlightened *toleration* ends. When the thing called religion, is nothing more than baptized criminality—when it is so believed and professed, as in its very nature to entrench on the civil and natural rights of others; then, the guardians of society must repel it. A religion that, in its very nature violates life, property or chastity, has no claims to toleration. No pretension to a divine origin, should screen any system of either Thuggism or Mormanism. That which strikes at the root of society, or aims at poisoning the essential well-being of mankind, clearly proves itself of hellish origin, and in alliance with him that was a murderer from the beginning.

But to return—The fact is, that persecution for conscience sake is at once a monstrous crime, and a matchless folly. Great Britain now fully recognizes this. She owns that it is not to mortal man that human beings are accountable for their belief, but to the God that made them, watches over them, and will judge them. If their faith be *inoffensive* to their neighbours, and their practice *blameless*, then they are to have the fullest toleration. Than this, no principle can be more just, more plain, and on the whole more beneficial to society. Yet, it was long ere even wise legislators fully learned this. Oliver Cromwell, one of the great fathers of British liberty, seems to have been among the first, who had any true notion of the principle of liberty of conscience. And there is reason for believing that, had he been allowed fully the bent of his own mind, he would have ultimately given this precious boon to all. But in this, as well as in other matters, he was a man that lived before his time. England for two generations after his death continued grievously to persecute her own children for conscience sake, and even so late as the middle of the last century men died for their religious opinions in France.

Nor must we lay the flattering unction to our souls, as if persecution were only found in connection with some hateful form of superstition. Persecution, if well thought of, will be found to be pride, malice and envy, nursed by fanaticism and put forth when occasion offers by the dominant party against the weaker. It has ever been thus since Cain slew his brother. It is by far the worst form that a hellish malignity takes in the strong warring against the weak. When the Arabian Prophet

drew his scimitar and declared that he would bathe it in the blood of all that did not receive the faith, he stood forth the perfect type of a persecutor. Believe this or die, was the brief and terrible maxim. The church of Rome has often embodied this maxim in her practice. But now, we make the mournful confession that, Protestants have not been free from this stupid and detestable abomination. In their skirts also, have been found the blood of the innocent.

But thank God, the simple truth of religious toleration has at length triumphed. And we say it, with a joyful boldness that, Great Britain is the first great power that has thoroughly learned and thoroughly practises the heavenly principle—of doing to others in this sacred matter “as we would have others do to us.”—Britain has not sheathed the sword of persecution—she has broken it on the altar of justice and charity. And now she proclaims a perfect toleration, not only to all nominal christians; but to all others. For there is not a religious opinion held among all her subjects, from the wildest Feticism up to the purest forms of christianity, which is not fully tolerated. No man can interfere with the *rituals* of a cathedral and its Bishop in his pontificals, nor with the minister going through his most *simple service*—no, nor with a set of heathen devotees bowing down to stocks and stones. All are alike, safe, for all are alike, protected by the great law of toleration.

Nor is it fair to say, that all this is but the fruit of British indifferency, or infidelity. No:—infidelity when it has power on its side, and when its selfish ends seem to require it, is very loath to grant toleration. This should surprise no one. If persecution be the product of pride, malice and fanaticism, we need not wonder that, these find a congenial soil in the heart of the infidel, and that when his power is opposed he will shew his fangs surcharged with the poison of persecution. But no argument need be employed to meet this. The British Government is by no means an Infidel Government. A copy of the Bible is put into the hands of the Sovereign at the coronation. This, alas, has been often nothing more than a part of the pageant. Yet, it surely is something more than a feeble wish, or a fond surmise that the powerful and salutary lessons of that blessed Book, have been transfused through the conscience and heart of the *highest*

personage at present in the government. A beautiful thing occurred some time ago. A black governor of Liberia had an audience of the Queen. He asked her Majesty, whence Great Britain drew her mighty power? A Bible was lying on the table—on this she laid her hand and said—*from this book, from this book.*

No, it is not infidelity, it is not indifferency that hath taught the British people to practice toleration. It is mere ignorance, or malice that says so. Alas, we know it well enough, that infidelity is rife in Britain, and that there are tens of thousands who care nothing about religion. Yet, among that noble people, are there not millions "who fear the Lord and call upon his name?" And are there not many leading statesmen who have learned the great lessons of manliness, humility and piety from the Bible? "To do justice and love mercy," is the real secret power of the toleration which Britain extends to her three hundred millions of people dwelling in all climes, speaking all languages, occupying all degrees of civilization and professing all known beliefs. What a glorious spectacle. It might be a sufficient answer to the charge of national infidelity, or indifferency to point to what the British Nation is doing, for *the conversion of the world to the true God.* This people with their high toleration, contribute nearly as much as all the other christian nations, for the diffusion of the gospel throughout the world. They look with a very tender and fruitful pity on the millions who know not God, nor the Saviour. But then, they apply no force to bring about the conversion of any one man. *Force* is not indeed among their appliances. They appeal to their reason, their hearts and their consciences. The only instrument they apply, under the guidance of the spirit, is *moral suasion.* This is really the only force which man can employ for conversion, and it is that, and that alone, which is employed by the mightiest empire on earth. And then, look at the way in which Britain works this power! By millions she sends the Bible forth in all languages and to all lands. She has made herself the true *Bible House* of the world. Again she sends her heralds of the cross forth by thousands to do the sublimest work, and to dare the hardest warfare that men ever encountered. Many of

them brave, learned, pious men, to die in their youth in unhealthy climes; and some of them literally to be eaten by the savages they sought to convert. I say that this is grand—very grand—so much sympathy, so much labour, so many sacrifices, and all combined with the most genuine toleration.

One word more—from no Spanish dungeon—from no Italian village, is the cry of the persecuted for conscience sake ever heard with indifferency. It thrills alike the hearts of the dwellers in palaces and in cottages. There may be great difficulties in the way, but by some means or other, the moral influence of Britain is brought to bear upon the oppressors. Oh, it is most true, and one does like to see it—that the British heart is moved to its depths when some poor man or woman dies for conscience sake in Cadiz, or Barletto. In a thousand different ways, she is the great teacher of toleration, in religion, often enough, does she teach it in tears, and with prayers, but never altogether ineffectually.

III. *Great Britain teaches, that justice in government is its great and sole strength for good.*

Rights constitute justice. With these it has alone to deal. Hence, if any human being could be found without either relative or essential rights; then no injustice could be done to that man. Those who traffic in slaves really assume that principle. They say, the blacks have no rights, and we do them no wrong by enslaving them. It were to question your moral sense and understanding, to attempt any reply to this. Justice, although no new idea—for it is as old as man; yet, has received some of its most signal illustrations from the conduct of the British government.

Justice being the *preservation* of rights, where they are possessed, and the *restoring* of them when taken away, will ever find abundant scope in our world. Indeed so thoroughly does it traverse all the affairs of men that, you will either find it—or find the want of it—in every human transaction. It is the basis of all order, prosperity and peace in the family. It reigns in all courts called courts of Justice, or they become the most frightful dens of iniquity. Yet, no one needs to be told that its grandest field—for there it can do most good—is in the government of a

great country. A powerful government without justice is a striking image of the dominion of Pandemonium. One rejoices that this cannot continue very long on earth, else, the annihilation of the species would be the infallible result. God does not intend this—hence, by a wise arrangement he has so ordered it—that extreme injustice produces sooner or later the revenge called a “wild justice,” which *checks* and overpowers injustice in a way, and matters are thus partly righted, so that the world goes on after a sort. But let the tears, the unrewarded toils, the woes and the blood men shed like water tell—for no words can tell—what injustice has done to poor suffering humanity.

I again must throw myself upon your knowledge—especially your knowledge of history, for illustrations of this. For alas, what is the greater part of *history*, but a foul catalogue of the injustice of governments. That of Great Britain in past ages is no exception. For instance, how grievously did she oppress Ireland for hundreds of years? It is as painful to think of this, as it is joyful to know, that the noblest manifestations of justice are now seen in that land. Nothing but the sheerest ignorance, or the most unmitigated malignity can deny this. For more than a generation justice has emphatically been done to Ireland. It were, however, vain to deny, that injustice was the normal and chronic condition of Great Britain for long ages. If she had a Prince—and there were a few—who sought to do justice; his life was rendered miserable by subtle and reckless statesmen, who surrounded and haunted him, all eagerly bent on acts of oppression and knavery. Again and again when reading these narratives of injustice and cruelty, I have thrown down the history of England with intense loathing. It was a marvel that the nation survived it; yet it somehow lived through it all. God willed it so, that it should not die—choked with injustice. For the time was to come, when out of this confusion should come order, and out of this hideous deformity should arise the most splendid justice. Great things were in store to be developed by the British people. A bright day has dawned and now shines effulgently. The Phenix has arisen from its ashes.

But here it is needful that, I should say once for all, that when I mention the justice of the British government, I mean

inclusive of that the *just heart* of the British people. I do mean, and have all along meant through this discussion that, John Bull has essentially a just heart and an honest conscience. It is most true, he stutters out at times a blundering piece of nonsense, or seeming injustice through his *organs of speech*—his Parliament and Press—yet when you lay your hand on his heart, you find no spasms—no indications of heart disease, but a full healthy beat of just and honest intentions. Nor should it escape notice that, these are very extensive and go very far. He is just to his friends and just to his foes; just to the great and powerful and very just to the *weak and oppressed*. This is truly noble. For while the heart of a great people is just and wise under a representative government, things cannot go far wrong. Yet I do by no means think that this justice is perfect. There is no perfectly just man, far less a perfectly just government. What I plead for is, that the highest exemplification of public justice is to be found in that government, and among that people. Indeed, there is so much of the popular voice now heard in the government of Great Britain, that the sense of justice in the people must come out in the acts of the government. But the extension of the franchise, must, by no means be regarded as the commencement of the reign of justice in the government. Long before that event this national characteristic was strongly felt. Had it not been so, instead of a Reform Bill there would have been a wild and bloody revolution. Still it is very worthy of notice that, the large infusion of the popular element has not lessened, but greatly strengthened a sense of justice in the legislature. This clearly proves that the *heart* of the people, when the thing on which they act is fully known, is just. But now in order to bring out clearly what is meant by British justice, I select a few instances for illustration.

1. *The stoppage of the slave trade.*

For many years, like other maritime nations, Great Britain took part in this traffic, and shared largely in its profits. I need not dwell on the enormities of the slave trade. It is enough to say that, in the whole history of human crimes there is nothing more flagrantly unjust. It tore human beings from their native land without the least shadow of any offence, committed by them.

It crammed them into the holds of ships to endure unutterable woes, and as many as lived through the middle passage, were then sold into unmitigated slavery. This was really not the business of men, but a trade fit for incarnate fiends. It is strange that a christian people, should long have endured the enormity. They endured it just because they did *not know* it—because their minds dwelt not on its heinous injustice. But no sooner was the majestic iniquity unveiled to them, than their hearts revolted at the frightful thing. It was like the opening of hell to the sight of beings, whose conscience tells them that they have done something to fill it. A loud and indignant cry was heard all over the land, that this iniquity must cease—that this iniquity must be abolished.

But our trade—yes our trade—what of that? It will surely be injured, cried many thoughtless and wicked shipowners and politicians. Other nations will continue the traffic, said these men—and gain all the profit. Let trade perish—let other nations make out of this trade what they may, we shall end it—we shall shake our skirts clear of it, cried the voice of an indignant and just people. And so they ended it, and a great act of national justice was done, and of mercy to the helpless. But justice may be done, and conscience looking back on old crimes may be ill at ease. A noble supplement to this act, or rather two were to follow, before the conscience of the British people could be satisfied. The traffic in slaves, as still carried on by other nations, must, if possible, be stopped. Great Britain appealed earnestly to principles and honor, but found little response. She then set to work to buy off those engaged in the traffic. For this she gave millions to Spain alone. She brought up the matter at European Congresses, and urged it earnestly and as far as she could entered into treaties with all the maritime powers to end the horrid traffic. And finally—for I must forbear—she placed her ships as guardian angels all along the west coast of Africa, to prevent the poor Negro from being dragged into hopeless slavery.

But I now come to the second instance of what I call the other supplement to the clearing of the conscience of the British people. The abolition of slavery so far, did not free them entirely from this great infamy. The people came to see that, the evil still lay at their door in a very monstrous form; while

the negro was still held in bondage in the colonies. The great voice of the people was again heard, and the cry was—Let all the oppressed forever go free. But justice, never works at cross purposes, nor suicidally destroys itself. If the slave had his rights, so had the planters. They held their slaves by the sanction of the government. It no doubt had the power to declare every slave free, at least in the crown colonies. But this would have been manifest injustice.

Burdened with an enormous debt and greatly oppressed with taxes, the British people, as an act of justice, agreed to pay for the manumission of every slave in her world wide dominions. Men of other nations did not know what to make of this. Indeed, they made everything of it which selfishness could guess at, but the right thing—an act of sacred justice to all parties. The act was absolutely too grand for the clearest sighted politicians that go by expediency. It was such an act of self denying justice, as will be sought for in vain in the annals of the world. You cannot do it—it is mere romance—you cannot emancipate your slaves. You cannot afford the expense, and besides, you will destroy your sugar colonies and do all other kinds of mischief—cried many heartless and selfish opponents of the scheme. But all this, whether truth or falsehood had to be set aside, simply because eternal justice forbade its being listened to. Eternal justice said, do the right thing. Do your duty, let the oppressed go free and pay the twenty millions. The people listened to this and paid it. And the thing was done, and not a slave was found throughout the whole Empire. But what unjust and selfish men saw and could not understand. Angels saw and understood it well, and rejoiced over it, and God approved it; and the British people went to bed that night and slept as men do, who have a clear conscience. Many nations have equalled Britain in arms, and many have surpassed here in diplomacy; but here is a thing the like of which was never done by any of them.

III.—*The affairs of the Trent also shewed that the British Government makes justice its grand principle.*

War is now, and has been for a long time very hateful to Britain. Partly because she is a highly commercial country; but chiefly because war is the most irrational way of putting

matters to right when they have gone wrong. But much as she hates war, she was prepared for it with all its consequences, a few years ago on what has been called the Trent affair.

It happened in this wise—Two southern commissioners wished to go to Europe. They had taken passage on a British trading steamer, called the Trent. This vessel was waylaid by an American ship of war, and the Commissioners were taken. Great were the rejoicings, and many were the high flown compliments paid to the bold captain who was not afraid to take the British Lion by the beard. Loud boastings and threats were heard on all hands through the Northern States. But all this had soon to take end. Great Britain had no special love for these commissioners, nor their cause, nor indeed had she any reason. These men had most villainously abused her on the question of slavery. But then, they were taken from one of her trading vessels, in violation of the plainest laws of nations, and of course in violation of *justice*. There was no hesitation as to what should be done. The order was calmly but peremptorily given—these men must be set at liberty. Hatred and amazement filled the whole Northern States. A cry of astonishment was heard—will Great Britain go to war for two men who have always hated her and abused her? Yes, she will; for these two or any two in like circumstances. For as a British statesman remarked, she would do the very same thing for two of their slaves unjustly taken from one of her ships. We can all remember—and it was right noble how the whole empire arose and shook itself, putting its fleets and armies in motion, and awaited the issue of war, on the *sole* principle that injustice cannot pass unpunished.

Nor is this a solitary instance of the kind. She has on more than one occasion drawn the sword for individuals whose rights were imperilled with her own, and when justice required, that she should stand up for the defenceless. It was once said, impiously enough, that God is always on the side that has most cannon and cavalry. Not so—God is really on the side of the nation that has most of justice, and never fights but in a just cause. His power often seems slack in sustaining justice, or it comes in circuitous ways that the unjust dream not of. But come it will, and who can abide its coming.

I shall now for a very brief space illustrate *British justice in reference to her Indian Empire*.

The time I intend to occupy on this will be most inadequate to the subject. How has the Indian Empire grown up to its present majestic dimensions? Momentous question—for there are at present nearly two hundred millions that acknowledge the sway of Great Britain in the East. To a great extent these are not savages, nor uncultured men. They had a high civilization, when Britain was inhabited by a few wild tribes. It is true, their civilization never possessed the vigour of a pure morality. In this it was, and is sadly defective; as the Sepoy revolt fearfully demonstrated. Their civilization then does not account for their submission to a power on the other side of the Globe. Does their want of military skill account for it? neither answer is satisfactory. They hate and fear the authority to which they bow, and they fear and hate it all the more for the justice which is the real secret of that seemingly mysterious power, by which they are held in lawful subjection. Nothing were more silly than to ask—if British justice be so great, why does she not retire and leave all these myriads to themselves? She cannot retire, either with honor or conscience. She has been called to India for mighty purposes. God will not let her retire till she has accomplished *her destiny* there. She has to attend as physician to a people who were sinking into the decrepitude of a worn-out civilization, with all the inherent vices of the worst forms of Paganism. God has placed her in India, to infuse the principles of *justice* and *morality* into the minds of the people. But how does she hold her place, for this mighty task among these vast multitudes? No doubt the sword is employed “as a terror to evil-doers.” But the basis of British power in India is justice. Alas! there is no honest and well read man, but will blush when he thinks of the injustice that has been perpetrated by Englishmen in India. And yet, no well-read man needs to blush when he thinks that British justice has ever nobly awoken and demanded that right should be done, when the British people came fully to know that, their servants had been false, unjust, and cruel, these servants met with due reprehension.

But, I speak not of the past—for really there is no more childish, pettish, and what may prove insane conduct, than that criticism which indulges in carping at the unjust deeds of governments, when all these have been thoroughly amended. In India

at the present day, there is a great display of justice. This is the true secret of the power that, with a firm but kindly grasp, holds in subjection the Eastern Empire. I have no time for details here. Yet, when we think of the numberless tribes, the diverse religions, the civil institutions, the subtilty of the natives and the energy of a vast number of them—and when we reflect that, all this order of things or rather *disorder* is placed at the other side of the globe; no intelligent and candid man can fail to see that something far other than physical force rules in India. No doubt physical force has its place there, but *that rests* on a basis of broad and well defined justice. *This* with a few thousands of these Islanders, holds that vast country in peace and in order, and are guiding it on to the most prosperous issues. For thousands of years, the plains of Hindostan were the battle fields of barbarian conquerors, who came only to ravage and to waste. In the fairest portions of the globe, the life of man was rendered utterly miserable. It was not till these far off Islanders came, that poor men could sow and reap in safety; and in peace eat their morsel of rice, under the Bannana tree. All this they can now do with perfect safety. It would add not a little to the view I am now attempting to give, did I shew at large the vast systems of navigation, railroads and telegraphs, which Britain is introducing into India. I cannot, however, say anything on this.

But now, I turn in fine to a matter, some parts of which ought to be better known to you than the rule of Britain in the East. Let us now look for a moment how *British justice rules among her colonies*. The number of these is about fifty, and somewhere about forty of them have representative governments. These are in all parts of the world, on all the continents, and in many of the greater islands, Britain has planted her standard, and around it her children have gathered, and she sits now as a mighty mother, beholding, defending and directing this vast progeny of young states. All these are growing rapidly in population, in wealth, and in the civilization of the country that gave them birth. I know not that the sun in all his course beholds a more sublime spectacle—all free, all protected, all prosperous, and all engaged in the responsible task of self-government. Oh, that God would make them successful imitators of the great country from which they have sprung:—Yea, and she sits teaching them specially

that mightiest lesson in government, whether for small or great states—that God's justice faithfully wrought out by human instrumentality, is the true divine policy—teaching them night and day that, the just man is the strong man, and that the just nation will become in the long run the powerful nation—that the weak will cling to it—that the perplexed will look to it for counsel, and that even envious neighbours, while they hate it will respect and fear it. And, moreover, does she not sit teaching them that, she has achieved greatness, not solely by human energy, but by that energy being directed by heavenly justice—and she tells them all that she has risen to be *the umpire* of the world, not by her armies and fleets; but by ever sustaining the just cause. In fine, she tells all these *children* that, she has become the banker of the world by strict probity. And O, how noteworthy is it, that while she is teaching all this and doing all this, no boastings are heard from her lips. A noble reticence, a strange unconsciousness seems all the while to be deeply felt. She leaves her works to be spoken of by her children with admiration and gratitude, or *cares not much* whether they are spoken of at all. And it now requires to be deeply pondered, that if any of these colonies are smitten with such madness as not to appreciate their relationship to the mother country; and shall become so lost to all gratitude, and all present and prospective good, they may *leave*, and work out their own fortunes under other auspices. This really appears to be the singular attitude which Great Britain is now taking towards her colonies. The connection is henceforth to be mainly in moral force. But let all know that to do violence to this may be the most fatal act—the saddest kind of political suicidism.

"To whom much is given, of them much shall be required." To the Colonial Empire assuredly much has been given. But men may play it all falsely. Our statesmen may forget the truthfulness, manliness and justice of their native land. They may become mean men, and mean men are always unjust. They may substitute *finesse* for fair dealing, expediency for truthfulness, and low trickery for sacred justice. In their whole conduct, they may become so utterly false as to make their positions a loathing to all honest men. When it comes to this—the warning is not needless—it will be easy to read our horoscope. We shall

lose shamefully the fairest heritage of all kinds that a parent state has ever bequeathed to its colonies. Not liberty merely and a solid prosperity shall then go—but anarchy, despotism and utter ruin shall then have come. We shall stand forth the vilest political spendthrifts that have ever wasted a noble patrimony.

May God in mercy prevent this—and may He in His wisdom ever give us men of true greatness—men who hate covetousness, and who love and practise justice.

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